

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

**Listing of Claims:**

1. (Currently Amended) A method of promoting protein absorption and utilization from the gastrointestinal tract of a subject comprising the oral administration of a combination of milk protein concentrates and probiotic bacteria in an amount sufficient ~~to increase the~~ to increase the subject's total daily consumption of protein to between approximately 1.5 grams and ~~to~~ approximately 4.0 grams of protein per kilogram of body weight per day; the milk protein concentrate having a protein content of about 65% to about 90% and there being about 100,000 to about 50,000,000 probiotic bacteria organisms per gram of milk protein concentrate.

2. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 wherein the probiotic bacteria is selected from the group consisting of *bifido* bacteria, *Lactobacillus plantarum*[], *Lactobacillus helveticus*, *Lactobacillus paracasei*, *Lactobacillus bulgaricus*, *Streptococcus thermophilus* and combinations thereof.

3. (Previously Amended) The method of claim 1 wherein the probiotic bacteria consists of *Bifidobacterium longum* combined with *Lactobacillus bulgaricus* and *Streptococcus thermophilus*.

4. (Canceled).

5. (Canceled).

6. (Canceled).

7. (Currently Amended) A method of promoting protein utilization and absorption in a subject on a high protein diet comprising the oral administration of combination of milk protein concentrates and probiotic bacteria, the probiotic bacteria

being selected from the group consisting of *bifido* bacteria, *Lactobacillus plantarum*[], *Lactobacillus helveticus*, *Lactobacillus paracasei*, *Lactobacillus bulgaricus*, *Streptococcus thermophilus* and combinations thereof; the subject being administered an amount of the combination sufficient ~~to increase the~~ to increase the subject's total daily consumption of protein to between approximately 1.5 grams ~~to~~ and approximately 4.0 grams of protein per kilogram of body weight per day.

8. (Previously Amended) The method of claim 7 wherein the probiotic bacteria consists of *Bifidobacterium longum* combined with *Lactobacillus bulgaricus*, *Streptococcus thermophilus*, or combinations thereof.

9. (Canceled).

10. (Currently Amended) A method of promoting higher ratio of anabolism as compared to catabolism, promoting muscle tissue growth, promoting amino acid production in the intestinal tract in an athlete and promoting the utilization of protein consumed by the athlete, the method comprising the consumption by the athlete of a combination of milk protein concentrates and probiotic bacteria, the probiotic bacteria being selected from the group consisting of *bifido* bacteria, *Lactobacillus plantarum*, *Lactobacillus helveticus*, *Lactobacillus paracasei*, *Lactobacillus bulgaricus*, *Streptococcus thermophilus* and combinations thereof; the athlete consuming an amount of the combination sufficient ~~to increase the~~ to increase the athlete's total daily consumption of protein to between approximately 1.5 grams ~~to~~ and approximately 4.0 grams of protein per kilogram of body weight per day.

11. Canceled

12. Canceled

13. Canceled
14. Canceled
15. Canceled
16. Canceled
17. Canceled
18. Canceled